



Natural Resources Conservation Service
375 Jackson Street, Suite 600
St. Paul, MN 55101-1854

70 Years
"A Partner in Conservation Since 1935"

Phone: (651) 602-7900
FAX: (651) 602-7914

Transmitted via Email

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MINNESOTA BULLETIN NO. 290-5-2

SUBJECT: INV – CONSERVATION EFFECTS ASSESSMENT PROJECT (CEAP)

Purpose. To provide information about gathering data for a study.

Expiration Date. September 30, 2005.

In conjunction with the National Resources Inventory (NRI), the Conservation Effects Assessment Project (CEAP) is an initiative designed to quantify and estimate the outcomes and environmental benefits of our conservation programs. NRCS has entered into a partnership with the National Agricultural Statistical Service (NASS), the Farm Service Agency (FSA), and the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to conduct this study.

Field office support is an important part of the partnership effort to evaluate the outcomes and benefits of USDA conservation programs. NASS enumerators will need assistance in locating and interpreting the planning and practice information. **Information gained from the CEAP will illustrate the effectiveness of NRCS in the conservation partnership and the overall environmental benefits of Farm Bill Programs. It is important that we assist NASS in obtaining complete and accurate data from our records.**

Enumerators will receive NRCS training in September. Beginning in October, NASS will be conducting a survey of farmers in most Minnesota counties (see attached list, **MN.ceap.sample.05.xls**). Some field office support will be needed, usually less than a few hours per county.

NASS enumerators will be visiting NRCS field offices during the period from October to December 2005 to obtain specific information about: (1) whether or not the selected NRI point/field has a conservation plan; (2) what programs are associated with the conservation plan; (3) what year the conservation plan (or plans) was originally approved; (4) what is the year of the most recent update to the plan; (5) what resource concerns are addressed by the plan; and (6) what are the structural practices included in the plan.

All farmer interviews will be arranged and conducted by NASS enumerators (not at the field office). Enumerator visits to NRCS field offices will occur concurrently with farmer interviews.

Enumerators have been instructed to set up appointments for data collection prior to arriving at NRCS field office locations.

When collecting conservation planning data in the field office, the enumerators will be providing operator name, FSA Field and Tract number, and aerial photography to NRCS staff to help identify field locations and assist with accessing the proper field office records. They will also provide forms for the completion of the NRCS supplement. Field office staff should provide any assistance needed to complete the NRCS supplement. New this year is an instruction booklet for completion of the NRCS Supplement (**NRCS Supplemental Handbook.pdf**).

The following products and information regarding NRI-CEAP effort have been attached to this bulletin to provide NRCS field office staff with a general project overview and a better understanding of the important role that they will be playing in helping to gather data needed to evaluate the environmental benefits of conservation programs:

- A brochure prepared by NRCS and NASS (**Conservation_Brochure**) that describes the CEAP effort.
- A copy of the CEAP NRCS Supplemental Survey questionnaire (**Final_VI_05_NRCS.suppl.pdf**) that is an example of the questions that field office staff will help NASS enumerators answer about program involvement, resource concerns, and structural practices.
- An instruction handbook (**NRCS Supplemental Handbook.pdf**) for completing the NRCS supplement.
- An Excel spreadsheet (**MN.ceap.sample.05.xls**) showing the counties included in the study and all the PSU points in each county.

If you have any questions about the study or the field office responsibilities please contact Susan Ploetz, State Resources Inventory Coordinator, susan.ploetz@mn.usda.gov, (651) 602-7888.

WILLIAM HUNT
State Conservationist

Attachments

cc: AO
Susan Ploetz
Doug Hartwig
Craig Anderson
Kevin Stuckenberg